

Chairman Murphy and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

My name is Mignon Waterman. When I served in the Montana Senate, I had the pleasure of working with an attorney who staffed the Senate Education Committee. That was the start of an eighteen year friendship. And I was with her when she was diagnosed with stage IV pancreatic cancer. Because she did not have family here, those of us who were close to her, assured her that we would help her realize her last wish – to die at home with her beloved Border Collie. She and I watched Mr Baxter's press conference and she supported his case.

She had 18 great months and Hospice provided wonderful support. But in the end, there was no medicine that would control her pain. When the pain became unbearable, the Dr. would increase the medicine and when that didn't work, he would increase it again. After she received doses that the Hospice nurse said should have knocked down an Army mule, she lost control of her bodily functions, became paranoid, and attacked caregivers with scissors. In the end, it took three of us to hold her down in the hospital while they inserted the needle to do what they call palliative sedation. They put her to sleep and she died 24 hours later, in a hospital bed rather than at home with her beloved dog.

Had this option been available, I believe I know the day she would have asked the Doctor for the medicine and I believe I know the day she would have taken it. It would have shortened her life by about 3 days. But she would have died as she had lived – in control and with dignity.

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